Tips for Coping Through Grief and Loss

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Foundations of Faith Community Nursing , 2019
What is Loss?

“What the experience of not being able to keep or have access to something; having something taken away or destroyed; losing something to which there is an emotional investment”

- Foundations of Faith Community Nursing 2019
Types of loss

- body image
- health
- home
- family
- colleague or peer
- occupation
- finances
- reproductive status
- safety
- pet
- identity, autonomy, and independence
- Dreams

Types of body image, health, home, family, colleague or peer, occupation, finances, reproductive status, safety, pet, identity, autonomy, and independence, and Dreams loss.
What is Grief?

- “Deep sadness or distress when a person experiences a loss”
  - Foundations of Faith Community Nursing 2019
- “A conflicting mass of human dimensions experienced following any major change in a familiar pattern. Grief work is acknowledging reality”
  - Author unknown.
OTHER CONCEPTS

Suffering:
The experience of physical, emotional, or spiritual anguish, pain, or distress

Mourning:
Social process and outward expression of grief and sorrow

Bereavement:
The period of mourning in a state of intense grief after a loss, especially the death of a loved one

- Foundations of Faith Community Nursing 2019
Tasks of Mourning

1. Accept the reality of loss.
2. Work through the pain of grief.
3. Adjust to an environment in which the deceased is missing
4. Emotionally relocate the deceased and move on with life
How Can We Be Supportive?

- Listening
- Advocating
- Showing compassion
- Showing up
- Bear witness
- Walk alongside literally or virtually
- Sacred silence/ Lament
Tear Soup Tips: Grief Is:

- Physically, emotionally and spiritually exhausting
- Different for everyone depending on life experiences
- A challenge to our belief systems
- Triggered by sounds, smells, environments
- Distracting

http://griefwatch.com/pub/media/wysiwyg/Tear_Soup_Tips.pdf
Tips for Coping: Self

- Be honest about your feelings
- Tell your friends how they can help
- Be patient with yourself
- Rest, stay hydrate, eat even if you don’t feel like it
- Try writing your thoughts, talking with a trusted friend
- Support groups,
- Try not to compare your grief to that of others
- It’s OK to feel happy again
Tips for Helping Others:

- Listen, show up, call, send a card
- Offer to pick up groceries, be specific in ways to help
- Don’t offer platitudes, validate feelings
- Allow them to cry with you
- Remember holidays, birthdays and anniversaries
What to Say/Not to Say

Although many people want to comfort and help the bereaved, the stress and anxiety of the encounter sometimes makes it difficult to know what is actually helpful. Often, the phrase that is meant to help actually produces more pain and distress. What follows is a partial list of phrases that have been found to be helpful (or hurtful) in comforting the grieving person.

Adapted from: What To Do When Someone Dies Buz Overbeck - Joanie Overbeck TLC Group - Dallas, TX 1995
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT TO SAY</th>
<th>WHAT NOT TO SAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I'm sorry</td>
<td>I understand how you feel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm sad for you</td>
<td>Death was a blessing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are you doing with all this?</td>
<td>It was God's will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't know why it happened</td>
<td>It all happened for the best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can I do for you?</td>
<td>You're still young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm here and I want to listen</td>
<td>You have your whole life ahead of you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please tell me what you are feeling</td>
<td>You'll feel worse before you feel better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This must be hard for you</td>
<td>You can have other children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What's the hardest part for you</td>
<td>You can always remarry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'll call you tomorrow</td>
<td>Call me when I can help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You must really be hurting</td>
<td>Something good will come out of this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It isn't fair, is it?</td>
<td>At least you have another child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You must really feel angry</td>
<td>He (She) led a full life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take all the time you need</td>
<td>It's time to put it behind you now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you for sharing your feelings</td>
<td>Be strong!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: What To Do When Someone Dies Buz Overbeck - Joanie Overbeck  TLC Group - Dallas, TX 1995
http://home.windstream.net/overbeck/grfbrf28.html
References

- Grief Watch. Tear soup tips, retrieved 10/12/2020 from: https://griefwatch.com/downloads
Resources

- Grief Watch
  - [https://griefwatch.com/downloads](https://griefwatch.com/downloads)
- The Compassionate Friends: supporting family after a child dies
  - [https://www.compassionatefriends.org/about/](https://www.compassionatefriends.org/about/)
- Stephen Ministries: Journeying Through Grief Books
  - [https://www.stephenministries.org/griefresources/default.cfm/774?mnb=1](https://www.stephenministries.org/griefresources/default.cfm/774?mnb=1)
- CDC
- Family Caregiver Alliance
  - [https://www.caregiver.org/grief-and-loss](https://www.caregiver.org/grief-and-loss)
- UCC
  - [https://www.ucc.org/search_results?q=grief](https://www.ucc.org/search_results?q=grief)
- SNEUCC
  - [https://www.sneucc.org/grief-resources](https://www.sneucc.org/grief-resources)
Prayer book

- Pilgrim Press